

REMARKS

Claims 3-4, 6-9 and 11-25 are pending in this application. For purposes of expedition, claims 1-2, 5 and 10 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 3-4, 6-9 and 11-23 have been amended in several particulars for purposes of clarity and brevity that are unrelated to patentability and prior art rejections in accordance with current Office policy, to further and alternatively define Applicants' disclosed invention and to assist the Examiner to expedite compact prosecution of the instant application.

Claims 24 and 25 have been allowed without the necessity of amendments. Claims 3-5 and 13-16 have been conditionally allowed if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims 1 and 10. The Examiner's indication of allowability of these claims is noted with appreciation. For purposes of expedition, claims 3-4 and 13 have been rewritten in independent form to include limitations of their respective base claims 1 and 10 in order to place these claims in condition for allowance.

The Abstract of the disclosure, as filed in the Preliminary Amendment on July 31, 2001, continues to be objected to for containing too long a sentence. For purposes of expedition, the Examiner's suggested Abstract with a slight modification for grammar is hereby adopted to overcome the objection.

As a preliminary matter, the oath or declaration has been found defective because the cross-reference statement to the earlier U.S. Application Serial No. 09/260,074, now U.S. Patent No. 6,355,570 has not been included. In response thereto, a new declaration with the specific reference to the earlier U.S. Application

Serial No. 09/260,074, now U.S. Patent No. 6,355,570 is enclosed to overcome the objection.

Claims 1, 2, 6-12 and 17-23 have been rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 19-22 of U.S. Patent No. 6,576,559. While Applicants disagree with the Examiner's assessment of claims 1, 2, 6-12 and 17-23 over claims 19-22 of U.S. Patent No. 6,576,559, and note that a terminal disclaimer could be filed to overcome such a rejection, claims 1-2 and 10 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to render the applicable rejection moot. Independent claim 7 has been amended to incorporate limitations of allowed claim 4 in order to render the rejection moot and to place claim 7 and its dependent claims 18-23 in condition for allowance. Dependent claims 6 and 11-12 have been amended to depend the now allowed base claims 4 and 13. In view the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully request that the outstanding rejection be withdrawn.

Lastly, claims 7-12 and 17-23 have been rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,355,570. Again, while Applicants disagree with the Examiner's assessment of claims 7-12 and 17-23 over claims 1-9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,355,570, and note that a terminal disclaimer could be filed to overcome such a rejection, claim 10 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to render the rejection moot. Independent claims 7 and 17 have been amended to incorporate limitations of allowed claim 4 in order to render the rejection moot and to place claims 7 and 17 and their dependent claims 8-9 and 18-23 in condition for allowance. In view the

foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully request that the outstanding rejection be withdrawn.

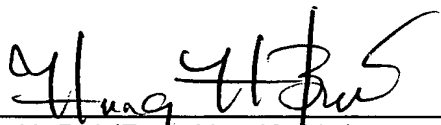
In view of the foregoing amendments, arguments and remarks, all claims 3-4, 6-9 and 11-25 are deemed to be allowable and this application is believed to be in condition to be passed to issue. Should any questions remain unresolved, the Examiner is requested to telephone Applicants' attorney at the Washington DC area office at (703) 312-6600.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. Please charge any shortage of fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account of Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, No. 01-2135 (Application No. 501.39474X00), and please credit any excess fees to said deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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By


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